

1792
GOD'S MERCY TO THE FATHERLESS,

CONSIDERED

In a SERMON,

Preached in the Parish Church of St. GILES,

in READING,

On the 21st Day of DECEMBER, 1786,

For the Benefit of the GIRLS CHARITY SCHOOL,

in READING;

And now published for the Benefit of the same Charity.

By WILLIAM BROMLEY CADOGAN, M. A.

Rector of St. Luke's, Chelsea, Vicar of St. Giles's, Reading,

And Chaplain to the Right Hon. the Lord Cadogan.

If God so loved us, we ought also to love one another.

READING:

**PRINTED by A. M. SMART and T. COWSLADE; and Sold
by J. F. and C. RIVINGTONS and J. MATHEWS, LONDON;
and J. FLETCHER, OXFORD.**

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On the 17th of November 1786.
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By WILLIAM BROWLEY-EDGEMAN, M.A.

Reader of the Inner Temple, Vicar of St. Giles's Church,
and Chaplain to the Right Hon. the Lord Cadogan.

It shall be found, that we ought to love one another.

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HOSEA xiv. *Latter Part of Third Verse.*

IN THEE THE FATHERLESS FINDETH MERCY.

THIS chapter begins with an exhortation to repentance, and God not only exhorts them to repent, but puts words into their mouths, with which they may return unto him. "O Israel, return unto the Lord thy God; for thou hast fallen by thine iniquity. Take with you words, and turn unto the Lord; say unto Him, take away all iniquity, and receive us graciously: so will we render the calves of our lips. Ashur shall not save us; we will not ride upon horses: neither will we say any more to the work of our hands, Ye are our Gods; for in Thee the fatherless findeth mercy."

B

In

In speaking upon these words we are naturally led to enquire, first, who are the fatherless;—secondly, what is the mercy which they find;—and thirdly, where they find it.—in “THEE the fatherless findeth mercy.”

First then, the term “Fatherless” is put into the mouths of those, who had turned from the living and true God unto idols, “mingled with the heathen, and learned their works:” which was the case with Israel and Judah when Hosea prophesied, that is “in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, Hezekiah, kings of Judah, and in the days of Jeroboam the Son of Josiah, king of Israel.” The prophet is commissioned to point out to them by signs and by words their spiritual fornications, a very striking expression, by which the Holy Ghost marks the idolatry of those, to whom “I was an Husband, saith the Lord”: and to whom the Lord represents himself as a

Chap i, 1.

Jer. xxxi, 32.

Father

If we look into the thirty-second chapter of the Book of Deuteronomy, we there find an account of the parental dealings of God with the Children of Israel. "Is not He thy Father that bought thee? hath He not made thee and established thee? Remember the days of old, consider the years of many generations: ask thy father and he will shew thee, thy elders and they will tell thee. When the Most High divided to the nations their inheritance, when He separated the sons of Adam, He

" set the bounds of the people according to
 " the number of the Children of Israel. For
 " the Lord's portion is his people, Jacob is
 " the lot of his inheritance. He found him
 " in a desert land, and in the waste howling
 " wilderness; He led him about, He in-
 " structed him. He kept him as the apple
 " of his eye. As an eagle stirreth up her
 " nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth
 " abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth
 " them on her wings: so the Lord alone did
 " lead him, and there was no strange God
 " with him." In the same chapter they are
 warned of those sins by which they should
 lose all these privileges, and reminded of that
 base principle of ingratitude in the human
 heart, which kindness but too often puts in
 motion. " But Jeshurun waxed fat and kicked;
 " thou art waxen fat, thou art grown thick,
 " thou art covered with fatness; then he
 " forsook God which made him, and lightly

* V. VI, 12.

" esteemed

"esteemed the Rock of his salvation. They
 "provoked him to jealousy with strange
 "gods, with abominations provoked they
 "him to anger. They sacrificed to devils;
 "not to God; to gods whom they knew
 "not, to new gods that came newly up,
 "whom your fathers feared not. Of the
 "Rock that begat thee thou art unmindful,
 "and hast forgotten God that formed thee."

Such was the character of the Israelites
 in the times when God raised up most of
 their prophets among them; and if theirs
 was a fatherless condition in consequence of
 their mixing with the heathen, such doubt-
 less was the condition of the heathen them-
 selves. When St. Paul was at Athens,^a
 "his spirit was stirred within him upon see-
 "ing the city wholly given to idolatry, and
 "upon finding an altar with this inscription,
 "to the UNKNOWN GOD." It is true in-
 deed that in his discourse upon this occasion
 he represents God as the common parent of

^a Y. xv, 16.

^b See Acts xviii.

all mankind, as "not far from every one of
 "us; for in him we live and move and are,
 "as certain also of your own poets have said,
 "for we are his offspring." But what do
 we expect to find in children? certainly the
 knowledge of their father; but here is an
 altar to the UNKNOWN GOD. We cer-
 tainly expect to find some resemblance of
 their father; "let us make man in our
 "image after our likeness; * but here are no
 traces of such resemblance to be found, for
 "my ways are not your ways and my
 "thoughts are not your thoughts, saith the
 "Lord." It is written, there is none righ-
 "teous, no not one: there is none that un-
 "derstandeth, there is none that seeketh
 "after God: they are all gone out of the
 "way, they are altogether become unpro-
 "fitable: there is none that doeth good, no
 "not one." These passages and many
 others of the like import the Apostle brings
 together in the third chapter of his Epistle

* Gen. i, 26.

† Isaiah, lv, 2.

to the Romans, and declares that they were written that "every mouth may be stopped" and all the world become guilty before "God." Again, what do we expect to find in children? we certainly expect the love of their father;—but they are "haters" of God;* and "the carnal mind is enmity against God, for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." † Once more, what do we expect to find in children? we expect a certain confidential nearness to their father; but where is anything of this kind between fallen man and the God that made him upright? The Apostle tells the converted Gentiles that they were "sometime afar off, having no hope," and "without God in the world." ‡ They dread every approach and apprehension of God—They "hate the light, neither come to the light, lest their deeds should be reprov'd"—they "put far away the day of judgment as an evil day—they cry

* Rom. i, 30.

† Rom. viii, 7.

‡ Ephes. ii, 12.

" to the seers see not, to the prophets pro-
 " phecy not, cause the Holy One of Israel to
 " cease from before us." Now this is our
 state by nature, the Apostle tells us it was
 the state of those who were now the distin-
 guished monuments of the grace and of the
 power of God; " and you (hath He raised
 " from the dead and set at his own right
 " hand in heavenly places) who were dead
 " in trespasses and sins; wherein in time
 " past ye walked according to the course of
 " this world, according to the prince of the
 " power of the air, the spirit that now
 " worketh in the children of disobedience,
 " among whom also we all had our con-
 " versation in times past, in the lusts of our
 " flesh fulfilling the desires of the flesh and
 " of the mind; and were by nature the
 " children of wrath even as others." They
 who are taught of God, and who have read
 their Bible to any purpose, must feel these
 truths; they must feel what the prodigal

* Ephes. i, 20. ii, 1, &c.

is represented to have felt, when he found himself ready to perish;* and knowing by sad experience that to depart from God is to depart from happiness, and that to persevere in sin is to pursue destruction, they resolve like him, "I will arise and go unto my father, and I will say to him, father, I have sinned against heaven and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son." Thus repenting and thus returning to the Lord their God in the way which he hath set before them, they will have cause to acknowledge that a "Father of the fatherless is God in his holy habitation."

This brings me to the second head of enquiry, namely, what is the "mercy," which the fatherless are said to find. And what can this mercy be but to be restored to the condition and privileges of the children of God? Is not "he thy father that bought thee?" So God's children are "bought with a price, not with corruptible things

1. v. 10. 11.

1. v. 10. 11. Luke xv.

1. v. 10. 11.

1. v. 10. 11.

C

" as

“ as silver and gold, but with the precious
 “ blood of Christ, as of a Lamb without
 “ blemish and without spot.”^a—They are
 also “ made and established,” they are a
 “ new creation,”—“ God’s workmanship
 “ created in Christ Jesus unto good works
 “ which God hath before ordained that
 “ they should walk in them,—^b they are
 “ renewed in knowledge after the image
 “ of Him who created them,” and establish-
 ed in the faith as it is in Jesus.—“ Being
 “ justified by faith they have peace with
 “ God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by
 “ whom also they have access by faith
 “ into that grace wherein they stand and
 “ rejoice in the hope of the glory of God.”^c
 What mercy is here?—no wonder that St.
 John should exclaim concerning it, “ Be-
 “ hold, what manner of love the Father hath
 “ bestowed upon us, that we should be call-
 “ ed the sons of God! Beloved, now are
 “ we the sons of God, and it doth not yet

^a 1 Pet. i, 19.

^b Ephes. ii, 10.

^c Rom. v, 1.

“ appear

“ appear what we shall be: but we know
 “ that when He shall appear we shall be
 “ like Him, for we shall see Him as he
 “ is.”^a Our astonishment at this mercy
 must increase, if we consider the methods
 which were taken to render it's designs ef-
 fectual; and of these we are informed in
 the fourth chapter of St. Paul's Epistle to
 the Galatians. “ Now the heir as long as
 “ he is a child differeth nothing from a
 “ servant though he be Lord of all, but
 “ is under tutors and governors until the
 “ time appointed of the father. Even so
 “ we when we were children were in bond-
 “ age under the elements of the world.” That
 is to say, God put us under the law as under
 a school-master, not to justify us, but to give
 us the knowledge of sin, that we might be
 trained up and prepared for receiving the
 glad tidings of the gospel.—The “ law is our
 “ school-master to bring us to Christ that
 “ we might be justified by faith,”^b and “ by

^a 1 John iii. 1.

^b Gal. ii. 24.

“ the law is the knowledge of sin. • But
 “ when the fullness of time was come, God
 “ sent forth his Son, made of a woman,
 “ made under the law, to redeem them that
 “ were under the law that we might re-
 “ ceive the adoption of sons.” Here are the
 methods which God has taken in order to
 effect the designs of his mercy : after having
 given the law (“ long before which the gos-
 “ pel had been preached unto Abraham,”^b
 in consequence of a “ purpose and grace
 “ given us in Christ Jesus before the world
 began”) • after having given us the law to
 convince us of sin, and so to teach us our
 need of a Saviour, “ when the fullness of
 “ time was come God sent forth his Son.”
 —And if you ask who this SON is, whom
 God sent into the world—you are told that
 He is “ the heir of all things, by whom
 “ also God made the worlds, that He is
 “ the brightness of God’s glory, the express
 “ image of his person, upholding all things

• Rom. iii, 20.

^b Gal. iii, 8.

• 2 Tim. i, 9.

“ by

“ by the word of his power, and having by
 “ himself purged our sins, set down on the
 “ right hand of the Majesty on high, being
 “ made so much better than the angels, as
 “ He hath by inheritance obtained a more
 “ excellent name than them; for unto which
 “ of the angels said He at any time, Thou
 “ art my Son, this day have I begotten thee?
 “ and again, I will be to him a Father, and
 “ He shall be to me a Son: and again when
 “ He bringeth in the first begotten into the
 “ world He saith, let all the angels of God
 “ worship him: unto the angels he saith,
 “ who maketh his angels spirits, and his
 “ ministers a flame of fire, but unto the
 “ Son, thy throne, O God, is for ever and
 “ ever, and Thou LORD in the beginning
 “ hast laid the foundations of the earth,
 “ and the heavens are the works of thy
 “ hands, they shall perish, but Thou re-
 “ mainest, they shall be changed, but Thou
 “ art the same and thy years shall not fail.”*

* See Hebrews 1.

What a wonderful messenger was this to send into such a world as ours! the Lord, God, the Governor, Preserver, Maker, Possessor of all things! and in what form was he sent? "made of a woman": that is, however miraculously conceived, yet born into the world exactly like the rest of mankind, "made in all things like unto his brethren, sin only excepted," as perfect man as He is perfect God: "forasmuch as the children are partakers of flesh and blood," "He also himself likewise took part of the same."* And in what condition did He appear? "made under the law:" this is the condition of the whole race of mankind. As there is but one Creator, so there is but "one Lawgiver who is able to save and to destroy":† and there is but one law which was originally written upon the heart of Adam when he was created in the image and after the likeness of his Creator; the transgression of this law was sin, it was the

* Heb. ii, 14.

† James iv, 12.

original sin, and it is sin unto this day :
 " because of transgression," by which this
 law of his maker was effaced from the heart
 of man and the law of sin introduced in it's
 room, " the law" the very same law " was
 " added" or revealed again by Moses,^a and
 written upon two tables of stone never to be
 done away, requiring only that reasonable
 service which we owe to our Creator and
 our fellow creatures, " thou shalt love the
 " Lord thy God with all thine heart and
 " with all thy mind and with all thy soul
 " and with all thy strength, and thy neigh-
 " bour as thyself," and threatening death as
 the consequence of transgression : " the wages
 " of sin is death."^b Therefore " almost all
 " things by the law were purged with blood,
 " and without the shedding of blood or
 " death there is no remission":^c Now
 Christ was made under the law, which we
 had broken, as our surety and representative,
 He undertook to obey it's precepts and en-

^a Gal. iii, 19. ^b Rom. vi, 23. ^c Heb. ix, 22.

dure it's penalties, and is therefore described as "fulfilling the law and the prophets and "all righteousness," as "having the chastisement of our peace and the iniquities of us "all laid upon him," as "being made sin "and a curse for us," and as "bearing our "sins in his own body on the tree":^a now if there never was but one law, and if there was never but one that obeyed it upon earth, the man Christ Jesus, and if he obeyed it under the characters before described, it is certain that there can "be none other name "under heaven given amongst men whereby "he must be saved, but only the name of the Lord Jesus Christ." We must either be "found in Him not having our own righteousness, which is of the law, but the righteousness, which is through the faith of "Christ, the righteousness which is of God "by faith," or we must be ourselves answerable for the fulfillment of the whole

^a Matt. iii, 15. v, 17, &c. Isa. 53. 2 Cor. v, 21.

Gal. iii, 13. 1 Peter ii, 24.

law, and be liable to everlasting punishment as the consequence of transgression. The design, with which Christ Jesus "was made" under the law, was to redeem them that "were under the law," that is, to perform the part of a near kinsman, one who by the Mosaic law had a right to redeem an inheritance, and was also permitted to vindicate or avenge the death of his relation, by killing the slayer, if he found him out of the cities of refuge.* Christ as the near kinsman of those, "whom He is not ashamed" to call brethren" was to redeem them from death and the grave, to recover for them the eternal inheritance, and to avenge them on Satan, their spiritual enemy, and murderer. "Forasmuch as the children are" partakers of flesh and blood, He also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death He might destroy him that "had the power of death, that is, the Devil;

* See Levit. 25, and Numbers 35, and Mr. Parkurft's Hebrew Lexicon under the word לֹאֵל.

D

" and

“ and deliver them, who through fear of
 “ death were all their life time subject unto
 “ bondage :” and all this, “ that we might
 “ receive the adoption of sons,” that we, who
 are fatherless by nature, having no natural
 right to be called the children of God,
 might be made so by “ adoption ;” we ac-
 knowledge as much in our beautiful collect
 for Christmas-Day, and we acknowledge no
 more than we are taught to believe in scrip-
 ture: “ Blessed be the God and Father of
 “ our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed
 “ us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly
 “ places in Christ : according as He hath
 “ chosen us in Him before the foundation
 “ of the world, that we should be holy and
 “ without blame before Him in love : having
 “ predestinated us unto the adoption of chil-
 “ dren by Jesus Christ unto himself, ac-
 “ cording to the good pleasure of his will.”
 But this is not all, the mercy of God does
 not stop with the sending of his son ; having

* Heb. ii, 14, 15. * Ephes. i, 3, 4, 5.

sent

sent his Son, He sends his Spirit also: " and
 " because ye are sons, God hath sent forth
 " the Spirit of his Son into your heart, cry-
 " ing, Abba Father." This is the Father's
 gift unto all his children, " If ye being evil
 " know how to give good gifts unto your
 " children, how much more shall your Fa-
 " ther which is in heaven give the holy
 " Spirit unto them that ask Him?"* The
 promises of Christ are express to this pur-
 pose, many of them are to be found in the
 fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth chapters
 of St. John's Gospel.—He expresses himself
 in a remarkable manner when he says, " I
 " will not leave you comfortless, in the
 " Greek it is *ορφανος* orphans;" which is as
 much as to say, that they, who have not the
 spirit of Christ, are in a " fatherless" condi-
 tion; indeed the Apostle says the same, that if
 " any man have not the spirit of Christ he
 " is none of his," that " as many as are led
 " by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of

* Luke xi, 13.

b John xiv, 18.

“ God,” that “ ye have received the spirit
 “ of adoption, whereby we cry Abba Fa-
 “ ther,” and that “ the Spirit itself beareth
 “ witness with our spirits that we are the
 “ children of God.” The Apostle Peter has
 expressly said on the memorable day of Pen-
 tecost, “ the promise is unto you and unto
 “ your children and unto all that are a far
 “ off, even as many as the Lord our God
 “ shall call”: from whence we may infer
 that the influences of the Spirit can not cease,
 being essential to the existence of the Chris-
 tian Church unto the end of time; nay they
 can not cease till the Church is complete in
 glory; “ but if the spirit of Him, that raised
 “ up Jesus from the dead, dwell in you; He,
 “ that raised up Christ from the dead, shall
 “ also quicken your mortal bodies by his
 “ Spirit that dwelleth in you.” We there-
 fore pray in our beautiful collect for Christ-
 mas-Day, “ that we being regenerate, and

† Rom. viii, 9, 14, 15, 16.

† Acts ii, 39.

† Rom viii, 11.

“ made

"made God's children by adoption and
 "grace, may daily be renewed by his holy
 "Spirit."

This is the "mercy," which is spoken of
 in the words of the text, and which is held
 forth in the gospel to those, who are by na-
 ture "fatherless", without hope and without
 God in the world. When a person has re-
 ceived "the Spirit of God's Son in his heart
 "crying Abba Father", he may be said to
 have "found" this mercy: as the Apostle
 speaks of himself in the first chapter of his
 Epistle to Timothy; "for this cause I ob-
 "tained mercy that in me first, or the chief of
 "sinners, God might shew forth all long
 "suffering, for a pattern to them which
 "should hereafter believe on Him unto life
 "everlasting." Now, reader, if this is the
 mercy which you and I want, (nay what
 must become of us without it?) and if it is
 freely and fairly held forth to us in the
 word of God, the great question is, where is
 it to be found?

This

This was proposed to us as the third head of enquiry—it is most important, and great emphasis is laid upon it in the words of the text, “in THEE the fatherless findeth mercy.”

The returning Israelites, whom we may venture with the Apostle to call “a remnant according to the election of grace,”^a are taught to come unto God as “fatherless, confessing their iniquity, and praying for it’s removal; “take away all iniquity:” they are taught to ask for a gracious reception, “and receive us graciously:” they are taught to renounce all other dependencies; “Ashur shall not save us, we will not ride upon horses, neither will we say any more to the work of our hands, ye are our Gods; for in THEE the fatherless findeth mercy.” Here the wicked are taught that this mercy is not to be found in the ways of sin; they, who are righteous in their own eyes, that it is not by works of righteousness which they have done; they, who

^a Rom. xi, 5.

are wise in their own conceits, that it is not found by any efforts of their wisdom; "but that it is the wisdom of God in a mystery, the hidden wisdom ordained before the world unto our glory." In short all are taught, that God is "the God of all grace," and that all mercy begins, continues, and ends with Him. Indeed the very enemies of Christ could say, "who can forgive sins but God only?" To dispense pardon to the condemned is an act of grace, which we consider as the prerogative of our Sovereign, it is the brightest jewel in his crown, and we never attempt to arrest it from him. How dare we then make such an attempt against "the blessed and holy Potentate, the King of Kings and Lord of Lords?" how dare we be offended, when He asserts his prerogative, "I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion?" — "I, I am He, that blotteth out thy trans-

• 1 Cor. ii, 7. • Exod. xxxiii, 23. • Rom. xi, 15.

" gressions

"gressions for my own sake, and will not
 "remember thy sins; ^a for my own sake, for
 "my own sake will I not do it, for how
 "should my name be polluted? and I will
 "not give my glory to another." ^b What
 is the Apostle's conclusion from such pro-
 mises as these? "so then, it is not of him
 "that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but
 "of God that sheweth mercy;" indeed St.
 Paul is clear and decisive upon this subject,
 that, "if it be of grace, it is no more of
 "works, otherwise grace is no more grace;"
 that "Abraham believed in God, and it was
 "counted unto him for righteousness; that
 "David describeth the blessedness of the
 "man, to whom God imputeth righteousness
 "without works, saying, blessed is the man,
 "whose unrighteousness is forgiven, and
 "whose sin is covered, blessed is the man
 "to whom the Lord will not impute sin;"
 —that "this blessedness is for circumci-

^a Isaiah xliii, 25. ^b Isaiah xlviii, 11. ^c Rom. ix, 26.

^d Rom. xi, 6.

^e Rom. 4.

“ sion and uncircumcision,” that is for Jew and Greek; that neither can be blessed in any other way, and that if any of either are alive unto God, they receive their life, like criminals, as a gift from their sovereign:

“ the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.”^a

As God is the author and giver of mercy, so He bestows it in his own way; and He hath appointed no way but one. “ All

“ things are of God, who hath reconciled us to Himself by Jesus Christ, and hath

“ committed to us the ministry of reconciliation: to wit, that God was in Christ re-

“ conciling the world unto Himself and not imputing their trespasses unto them. For

“ He hath made Him to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the

“ righteousness of God in Him.”^b This is God’s method of shewing mercy to the sinners of mankind: there is no God but one,

^a Rom. v, 21.

^b 2 Cor. v, 18, 19, 21.

and no way to him but one. "There is
 "one God and one Mediator between God
 "and men, the man Christ Jesus." I am
 "the way, and the truth, and the life, no
 "man cometh to the Father but by me."
 It is essential to true repentance or conver-
 sion to feel and acknowledge these truths;
 that God is the first and the last, the sole
 author and finisher of man's salvation; and
 that "He pardoneth iniquity, passeth by the
 "the transgression of the remnant of his he-
 "ritage, and retaineth not his anger for
 "ever, because He delighteth in mercy."
 "But God, who is rich in mercy, for the
 "great love wherewith He loved us even
 "when we were dead in sins, hath quick-
 "ened us together with Christ, by grace ye
 "are saved; and hath raised us up together,
 "and made us sit together in heavenly
 "places in Christ Jesus: that in ages to
 "come He might shew the exceeding riches
 "of his grace in his kindness towards us

^a 1 Tim. ii, 5.

^b John xiv, 6.

^c Micah, vii, 18.

through

“ through Christ Jesus : for by grace are ye
 “ saved, through faith, and that not of
 “ yourselves, it is the gift of God ; not of
 “ works, lest any man should boast ; for we
 “ are his workmanship, created in Christ
 “ Jesus unto good works, which God hath
 “ before ordained, that we should walk in
 “ them.”^a

Well may the prophet say, “ Who is a
 “ God like unto Thee ? ” and in the same
 word in which He hath caused “ his glory
 “ and his goodness to pass before us, and
 “ proclaimed, the Lord, the Lord God, mer-
 “ ciful and gracious, long suffering and
 “ abundant in goodness and truth,”^b He
 hath proposed himself to our knowledge
 and to our imitation.

“ Thus saith the Lord, let not the wise
 “ man glory in his wisdom, let not the
 “ mighty man glory in his might, let not
 “ the rich man glory in his riches ; but let
 “ him that glorieth, glory in this, that he

^a Ephes. ii, 4, &c. ^b See Exod. xxxiii, 18, 19: and xxxiv, 6.

“ understandeth and knoweth me, that I
 “ am the Lord, which exerciseth loveth kind-
 “ ness, judgment and righteousness in the
 “ earth.”^a As to other knowledge, it may
 qualify us to thrive or to shine in this life;
 but “ this is life eternal, to know Thee the
 “ only true God, and Jesus Christ whom
 “ Thou hast sent.”^b

Where there is the knowledge of God,
 which cannot subsist without his image, as
 the Apostle speaks of “ being renewed in
 “ knowledge after the image of him that
 “ created us,”^c there must be the imitation
 of God also. “ Be ye followers, *Μιμηται*
 “ imitators, of God as dear children, and
 “ walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us,
 “ and given himself for us an offering and a
 “ sacrifice to God, for a sweet smelling sa-
 “ vour.”^d It is impossible to be followers
 of God, and not to be found in the way of
 love; “ for love is of God; and every one
 “ that loveth is born of God, and knoweth

^a Jer. ix, 23. ^b John xvii, 3. ^c Col. iii, 10. ^d Ephes. v, 1.

“ God.

" God. He that loveth not, knoweth not
 " God ; for God is love." Here is our
 " persuasive to charity." *

If we trace to their proper source all the
 " malice and envy, in which we are living,
 " hateful and hating one another,"^b we must
 go back to our original departure from God,
 and obedience to sin, " as Cain who was of
 " that wicked one, and slew his brother."
 From that time to this the history of the
 world has been no better than the " roll of

* John West, Esq; left twenty shillings a year to the
 three ministers of Reading, for the time being, for preach-
 ing a sermon alternately in their respective parish churches,
 on the morning of every St. Thomas's-Day for ever; the
 subject thereof to be, A PERSUASIVE TO CHARITY. In the
 year 1779 it was proposed to unite practice with persuasion,
 by making a collection at the church doors, with a view
 to establish a *Charity School* for the education of Poor Girls,
 belonging to the three parishes of Reading.—The attempt
 was truly laudable, and has been wonderfully successful.
 But the progress of this good work must still depend, under
 God, upon the continuance and increase of the public
 bounty.

^b Tit. iii, 3.

" Ezekiel,

“Ezekiel, written within, and without,
 “lamentations, and mourning, and woe.”

Our return unto God is the only remedy
 for that mischief, which was caused by our
 departure from Him: and our way is plain
 before us, even JESUS CHRIST, “who once
 suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that
 He might bring us to God.”^a From his
 mouth we receive a “new commandment,
 “that we love one another.^b Give to him
 “that asketh thee, and from him that would
 “borrow of thee turn not thou away. Ye
 “have heard that it hath been said, Thou
 “shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine
 “enemy; but I say unto you love your ene-
 “mies, bless them that curse you, and pray
 “for them that despitefully use you and per-
 “secute you; that ye may be children of
 “your Father which is in heaven: for He
 “maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on
 “the good, and sendeth rain on the just and
 “on the unjust. Be ye therefore perfect,

^a 1 Pet. iii, 18.

^b John xiii, 34.

“even

“even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect ;” or, “be ye merciful as your Father also is merciful.”*

But besides a persuasive to charity in general, we wish to recommend a particular object of your attention and bounty : which, as it is calculated to promote a reformation of manners amongst us, may undoubtedly be considered as a national concern. How frequent are robberies and murders amongst us ? how common and just the complaints, not only that we cannot travel our roads or sleep in our houses with safety, but that we cannot get servants, upon whose fidelity we can depend ? to what is all this to be ascribed ? certainly to the corruption of our nature, in the first place, but in the next, to the want of all attempts to counteract that corruption, by a religious Christian education. I say, “a religious Christian education :” for to what are we to ascribe the profligacy and profaness, which prevail in the higher ranks

* Matt. v, 42, &c. and Luke vi, 36.

of life, and are diffused from them throughout the whole circle of their inferiors and dependents, but to the sad neglect of inculcating the principles of the doctrine of Christ in the course of their education? It is a fact too notorious to be denied, and of too serious consequences not to be lamented, that whilst all possible pains are taken to “teach all” that wisdom by which the “world knew not God,” none are taken to inculcate “the wisdom which is from above,” by which alone we can know Him. A person may pass through most of our public seminaries, and our two famous universities also, and never once have put into his hands, as the book for study and meditation, **THE SCRIPTURE GIVEN BY INSPIRATION OF GOD.**

But as for the rich, they must do as they please; they are giving daily proofs of the truth of what is written, “that it is easier
“for a camel to go through the eye of a
“needle, than for a rich man to enter into
“the kingdom of God. To the poor the
“Gospel

"Gospel is preached," and to them we look for reformation. Much has been done, and much more may reasonably be expected, by the institution of Sunday Schools: and indeed we may always look for the blessing of God upon every attempt to rescue the rising generation from ignorance and sin: your repeated supports of this charity, for which I have the honour and happiness to plead, are proofs of an approbation, to which nothing that I can say may be supposed to add: but in recommending it from the pulpit, it becomes me to urge motives infinitely superior to those, which are temporary and political.

You profess and call yourselves Christians: and would to God ye were such, "not in word and in tongue only, but also in deed and in truth!" You ask, what claim have these children upon us as christians for our support? and you shall have their claim in "words which the Holy Ghost teacheth; we are orphans and fatherless, and our mothers are as widows." We

^aLamentations, v, iii.

or

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may

may have "fathers of our flesh," but thro' their poverty or wickedness, or perhaps both, we are deprived of the chief benefits, which we ought to receive from them. We look to you for parental instruction and care : to be snatched, as by an angel's arm, from prostitution and ruin, and to be conducted "to a little Zoar, that our souls may live;" and our misery is our plea for your mercy.

Let the richest and the best of us go to "the throne of grace," and what better can we say of ourselves, than that we are "orphans and fatherless?" and what can we see in ourselves, that could induce God to have mercy upon us, but the compassionate consideration, that we are "wretched and miserable and poor and blind naked?" but when God brings us to a throne of grace, He furnishes us with a plea, which supercedes the necessity of every other; unto us He hath given JESUS CHRIST, and unto "HIM a name which is above every name. "Ask whatever ye will in my name, and it shall be given you." We are taught also
to

to remember, that the same blessed and adorable Jesus, who is our Advocate with the Father, is also an advocate with us for the poor of mankind. "I was hungry

"and ye gave me meat, thirsty and ye gave
 "me drink, naked and ye clothed me, sick
 "and in prison and ye visited me. Verily
 "verily I say unto you, for as much as ye
 "have done it unto one of the least of these
 "my brethren, ye have done it unto me."

Then God bless this little seminary—God enlarge your hearts towards it—and God grant that this day's collection may abound with much thanksgiving to himself, much profit to these children, and much comfort to those, who have two objects at heart, which are ever connected, the glory of God and the good of mankind.

³ Mat, xxv, 42, &c.

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